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REPORT

OF

JOHN ROBERTSON,

PRESIDENT OF THE

MEMPHIS AND LITTLE ROCK R. R. COMPANY.

OFFICE MEMPHIS AND LITTLE ROCK R. R. Co.,
Little Rock, Oct. 22nd, 1860.

To his Excellency E. N. CONWAY,

Governor of Arkansas:

SIR—I beg leave herewith to transmit to your excellency the last annual report of the Memphis and Little Rock Rail Road Company of date of 20th of February last, together with a statement of the transactions of the company from that date to the present time.

The work on the line of the road has progressed steadily and without interruption up to the present date, and we have now a large force engaged, amounting to between two and three hundred men.

Since the date of the last report, contracts have been entered into with responsible parties for the building the bridge across the St. Francis river, and the work is in a very forward state of progress, so much so as to insure its completion within the next

three months. The heavy work on Crawley's Ridge is also under way and a large force at work. It is expected that as soon as the bridge is completed we can commence laying track at the St. Francis river and continue until we reach White river.

The third division of the road from White river to Little Rock, is nearly all graded and the greater portion of the cross ties required are already delivered. Hands are at work sufficient to complete the grade and furnish the balance of the ties as fast as they can possibly be needed for the track. In short, this division is now ready for track laying; and but for the unnavigable condition of the Arkansas river we would at the present time be engaged in laying down the iron from Little Rock eastward.

A contract has been made by the company with the responsible London house of Messrs. George Peabody & Co., through their agent in New York, Mr. James Tinker, for 8,000 tons of best quality of English rails to be delivered in New Orleans in monthly shipments of 1,000 tons—one shipment has already been received and the remainder will doubtless be delivered according to contract. This amount is sufficient to lay the entire road from its present terminus to Little Rock, and it is the design of the company to put down the track as fast as possible. Besides this contract for iron rails, we have contracted with Messrs. J. R. Anderson & Co., of Richmond, Virginia, to furnish us with all the chairs and spikes which may be required to complete our road. These contracts have been made upon the most favorable terms.

As soon as the navigation shall commence on the Arkansas river, and the iron can be brought from New Orleans, we will commence laying track from Little Rock. By that time or earlier we will commence at White river and by January or February we will commence at the St. Francis river and continue to lay track from these three different points until the whole road will be in full and complete operation.

Nothing will prevent this most desirable object but the want of means immediately available so as to press the work with the vigor and energy requisite. The company have experienced great difficulty in negotiating their securities, whether their own

bonds or the bonds of cities and counties, which have taken stock in the enterprise. Our lands are daily becoming more in demand, and we look to them ultimately as a source from which we will derive a fund to pay a large proportion of the cost of the road. But the means derived from this source comes too slow to be depended upon for the prompt building of the road.

If the State of Arkansas, through her legislature, would adopt some system of state aid to her public enterprises adapted to her financial condition, our road could easily be put through within the next twelve months and the capital of our state placed in connection by railroad with all the limes of road east of the Mississippi river, amounting to about thirty thousand miles. Not only this but all the other struggling enterprises of the state would receive new life, be stimulated into renewed energy and exertion, and the state would make strides in progress such as have no parallel in her previous history.

Respectfully submitted,

JNO. ROBERTSON, *President.*